INTRODUCTION TO BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING ON A BUDGET

Volume II

BY: LOU RUPP, WSF Board of Directors
(with assistance from Kevin Hurley, WSF Conservation Director; Justin Phillips, WSF Graphics Artist; bighorn sheep data on population size, number of hunting licenses, ram harvest, etc. largely provided by biologist representatives of the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies [WAFWA] Wild Sheep Working Group [WSWG])

(In 2009, WSF Board Member Lou Rupp led development of a series of 4 articles in WSF’s 2010 Wild Sheep magazines, designed to provide helpful information to prospective bighorn sheep hunters, about resources, contacts, and opportunities to hunt bighorn sheep, as either a “first-timer” or an “old-timer.” This 2013 update provides the most current information WSF could gather (as of mid-April 2013 press deadline)

Yes, I am well aware the title chosen for this article could be considered an oxymoron. However, this is exactly one of the major reasons the decision was made to research and present information included in the 2010 series of articles, especially in today’s up-and-down economy, with hunters having to be more and more concerned with costs associated with their pursuit. The second reason was in consideration of a “lesson-in-life” my dad instilled in me when I was growing up, that “experience is the best teacher, especially when you can capitalize on someone else’s experience.”

Therefore, these articles were designed to pass along our experiences regarding an introduction to bighorn sheep hunting. While the concept of a series of articles on this subject has always been in the back of my mind, the real tipping point came because of the feedback generated by numerous staff members and volunteers, who cover booths for the Wild Sheep Foundation at countless conventions and events across the country. These conventions and events give WSF Board members, staff, and volunteers many opportunities to talk one-on-one with numerous hunters from every walk of life, and hear their viewpoints on sheep hunting. If you have never had the opportunity to visit the WSF booth at a convention, it features a Stone’s sheep shoulder mount, for which any diehard sheep hunter would sacrifice his or her right arm. The mount definitely grabs people’s attention when they pass by, often prompting them to stop and look; we then have the opportunity to engage visitors in a conversation. During these conversations, we hear many reasons why to not go sheep hunting, whether it be cost, opportunity, or poor draw odds.

We hope the 2010 series of articles helped shed light on the many great opportunities that really do exist, for both beginning and experienced sheep hunters alike. Bighorn sheep hunting is not unlike any other sport, in that you can commit as much money as you can afford to spend. If you are just interested in experiencing a bighorn sheep hunt, and are concerned with minimizing expenses, there are several opportunities to consider. Many people are not
aware that combined, fifteen states and two provinces are home to a bighorn sheep population that totals almost 70,000 bighorns. This total consists of ~47,800 Rocky Mountain and California bighorns (Ovis canadensis canadensis) and 21,800 desert bighorns (Ovis canadensis nelsoni and O.c. mexicana) (K. Hurley, unpublished data).

In addition, not many people, even dyed-in-the-wool sheep hunters are aware that there are approximately 1,100 bighorn sheep licenses available each year in 15 western states, with another 2,500 or so largely available to residents of British Columbia and Alberta. The U.S. total consists of approximately 85% resident and 15% non-resident licenses. Now you have a more complete background for this referenced series of articles from Wild Sheep magazine. So, what we hope to present is the most current information we could gather, as of mid-April 2013:

FIRST, a state/provincial overview encompassing the information gathered from a 2012/2013 survey conducted with each western state and provinces’ bighorn sheep biologists regarding bighorn sheep populations, available annual bighorn sheep licenses (resident and non-resident), application deadlines, tentative drawing dates, plus pertinent/unique aspects of each state and/or province, i.e., bonus/preference point system, “super tag” lottery raffles, etc. [WSF Conservation Director Kevin Hurley also maintains and periodically updates a “wild sheep” spreadsheet covering 20 jurisdictions, for the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group].

SECOND, maps showing western state public lands, highlighting those federal lands with bighorn sheep populations. These reflect a combined effort involving the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and state fish and game agencies. Maps of occupied bighorn sheep habitat on Crown lands in Alberta and British Columbia are not included herein, but may be obtained from authorities in those provinces.

THIRD, a list of governmental agencies, application services, WSF Chapters & Affiliates, etc., where additional information relative to bighorn sheep hunting is available. We also offer some recommendations on where to apply for bighorn sheep licenses.

FOURTH, we provide an overview as to why opportunities to hunt bighorn sheep today are as good as they are, and will continue to expand in the future. A summary on bighorn sheep translocations in the western U.S. and Canada is provided, since most of these transplant actions were largely funded by the Wild Sheep Foundation and our network of WSF Chapters and Affiliates.

Whether you choose and plan a totally do-it-yourself hunt involving backpacking and freeze-dried food, rent a horse or two to pack gear and/or ride, hire a guide, or book a fully-outfitted hunt, our hope and intent is to provide information and encouragement that can be used in planning a bighorn sheep hunt. A bighorn sheep hunt based on you obtaining a highly prestigious, possibly a once-in-a-lifetime license. A hunt that will result in that magical moment when a successful hunter bends down to pick up and feel that majestic set of horns, and a new sheep hunter is born.

Hopefully, in the first part of the 2010 series of articles we provided a helpful summary of the basic details on how you can obtain one of the highly-coveted non-resident or resident bighorn sheep hunting licenses and tags. Obviously, the key to increasing your odds is first, to apply in as many states as your budget allows. Do not forget, some states allow you to apply with the use of a credit card, and the amount of the license is not charged unless you are successful and draw a license. Some would-be sheep hunters may be concerned with the idea of applying in a number of states in the same year, for fear of possibly drawing multiple licenses. Yes, it is possible, and Lady Luck even smiled on the author once, but the odds of drawing multiple licenses in a single year are so remote that if you do, you had better start buying state lottery tickets on a regular basis, since you must possess a magic touch you need to capitalize on, for sure.

Secondly, where applicable, you need to build bonus/preference points as often as possible for future years, and for sure, apply for “points only” in states where that opportunity is offered. We also included “Super Tag” information in the first series, which can be pursued whether you enter a state regular license application process or not. Hopefully, you will take advantage of both opportunities to maximize your chances of drawing that coveted bighorn sheep license or tag. Good luck!

The next most-asked question from prospective bighorn sheep hunters is, “Before I apply for a license, shouldn’t I have researched and identified an area containing a sheep population that is open for public hunting, in case I decide to try a do-it-yourself hunt?” The answer is obviously yes, and with today’s technology/information at the tip of your fingers, identifying western public lands open to all types of hunting, including bighorn sheep hunting, has never been easier. In addition, I personally do not think there has ever been as much public access hunting opportunities as exist today in the West.

In the western U.S., public land hunting opportunities are largely governed by the federal land-management agencies of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which encompass millions of acres, providing most of the habitat for bighorn sheep populations in the lower 48. Provinces like British Columbia and Alberta also contain millions of acres of Crown lands, again providing the strong majority of bighorn sheep hunting opportunities in southern Canada.
The following is a state-by-state list of National Forest lands within 14 individual state boundaries (not including Texas).

**National Forest Acres (by state)**

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<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>11,793,784</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>10,486,131</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>24,408,714</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>2,287,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>17,247,599</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>17,522,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>21,458,142</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>3,413,141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>19,249,391</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>9,129,869</td>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>567,343</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>10,563,079</td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>6,311,570</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>10,921,729</td>
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<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>10,486,131</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
<td>10,563,079</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>10,921,729</td>
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As always, a picture is worth a thousand words. Therefore, the enclosed maps show bighorn sheep distribution on USFS and BLM lands. Our federal land-management agency partners provide and manage habitat for the majority of bighorn sheep in the western U.S. Similar maps exist for provincial/Crown lands in British Columbia and Alberta.

After reading the first two articles of the 2010 series, your conclusion should be, “Yes, there is really a way I can consider going on a bighorn sheep hunt,” and the ignition switch is on, encouraging you to start the planning process. Keep in mind, bighorn sheep hunting, like most endeavors in life, offers rewards of success directly in proportion to the effort and time devoted to achieving the goal. Success starts with thorough research and planning, dedicated commitment, and ends, in this case, the day you join a privileged group of hunters whose trophy room features a set of those magnificent curly horns that generate lasting memories. Next, we are going to supply detailed contact information where valuable information can be obtained as you progress with your plans. As you start talking to the biologists listed here, and their colleagues, it will become immediately obvious, there is something very unique about people who are interested in bighorn sheep and bighorn sheep hunting. I tend to think this demonstrates a unique quality in this group of society, maybe a fraternal aspect of a shared interest, but whatever it is, everyone I have ever contacted requesting information or guidance when planning a sheep hunt has been extremely helpful and gone out of their way to help. If they do not know the answer to your question, you can bet they will know someone who does. Yes, sheep and sheep hunting generate a common fever!

**State-by-State Overview**

Let's start with a list of state/provincial Fish and Wildlife bighorn sheep contacts and WAFWA/WSWG agency reps (as of mid-April 2013 press time).

**Texas Parks & Wildlife Department**

Clay Brewer (WSWG Chair)
28 County Road 458, Rochelle, TX 76872
p 325-463-5001; c 512-217-3908
clay.brewer@tpwd.state.tx.us

**Alaska Department of Fish & Game**

Becky Schwanke
P.O. Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588
p 907-822-3431; c 907-259-3421
becky.schwanke@alaska.gov

**Arizona Game & Fish Department**

Bob Henry
9140 E. 28th Street, Yuma, AZ 85365
p 928-341-4048; c 928-580-0210
bhenry@azgfd.gov

**California Department of Fish & Wildlife**

Tom Stephenson
407 W. Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514
p 760-873-4305; c 760-937-0238
tstephenson@dfg.ca.gov

**Colorado Parks and Wildlife**

Andy Holland
415 Turner Drive, Durango, CO 81303
p 970-375-6722 c 970-403-4870
andy.holland@state.co.us

**Idaho Department of Fish & Game**

Jeff Gould
P.O. Box 25, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, ID 83707
p 208-287-2745
jeff.gould@idfg.idaho.gov

**Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks**

Bruce Sterling
P.O. Box 35, Thompson Falls, MT 59873
p 406-827-4389 c 406-250-5490
bsterling@mt.gov

**Nevada Department of Wildlife**

Mike Cox
1100 Valley Road, Reno, NV 89512
p 775-688-1556 c 775-842-8211
mcox@ndow.org

**New Mexico Department of Game & Fish**

Eric Rominger
P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504
p 505-476-8045; c 505-690-3207
eric.rominger@state.nm.us
North Dakota Game & Fish Department
Brett Wiedmann
225 30th Avenue SW, Dickinson, ND 58601
p 701-227-7431; c 701-290-5682
bwiedmann@nd.gov

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Don Whittaker
3406 Cherry Avenue NE, Salem, OR 97303
p 503.947.6325
don.whittaker@state.or.us

South Dakota Department Game, Fish, & Parks
Andy Lindbloom
20641 SD Highway 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532
p 605.223.7652; c 605.415.6422
andy.lindbloom@state.sd.us

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Froylan Hernandez
109 S. Cockrell, Alpine, TX 79830
p 432.837.3251; c 432.244.9620
froylan.hernandez@tpwd.state.tx.us

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Anis Aoude
P.O. Box 146301, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
p 801.538.4777; c 801.231.2568
anisaoude@utah.gov

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Rich Harris
600 Capital Way, Olympia, WA 98501
p 360.902.8134; c 360.489.2986
richard.harris@dfw.wa.gov

Wyoming Game & Fish Department
Doug McWhirter
2820 State Highway 120, Cody, WY 82414
p 307.527.7125; c 307.272.7186
doug.mcwhirter@wgf.state.wy.us

Wild Sheep Foundation
Kevin Hurley
720 Allen Avenue, Cody, WY 82414
p 307.527.6261; c 307.899.9375
khurley@wildsheepfoundation.org

British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
Dr. Helen Schwantje
2975 Jutland Road, Victoria, BC V8W 9M1
p 250.953.4285; c 250.361.7619
helen.schwantje@gov.bc.ca

Alberta Fish & Wildlife Branch
Jim Allen
9920-108th Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 2M4
p 780.427.4194; c 780.233.6963
james.allen@gov.ab.ca

Bureau of Land Management, Boise, ID
Tom Rinkes
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, ID 83709
p 208.373.4045; c 208.591.0863
tom_rinkes@blm.gov

U.S. Forest Service, Denver, CO
Melanie Woolever
740 Simms, Golden CO 80401
P 303.275.5007; c 720.891.5007
mwoolever@fs.fed.us

Most of the western states and provinces have published bighorn sheep management plans that provide valuable information about bighorns in their respective jurisdictions. The above-listed agency biologists/WSWG reps can provide information/links to their respective bighorn sheep plans. Would-be bighorn sheep hunters are encouraged to “bone up” on available info from these agencies!

Next, we provide a web link to WSF Chapters and Affiliates where additional information may be obtained. As you become familiar with these wild sheep conservation organizations, I strongly encourage your serious consideration of becoming a member of one, or several. If you love hunting as this author does, and want to make a difference and a positive impact for future generations as you enjoy the sport today, there is no better way than to become an active member of the Wild Sheep Foundation and our WSF Chapters and Affiliates.

M. David Allen, President/CEO of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, wrote of “the role of hunters in conservation,” in the January-February, 2010 issue of The Bugle, RMEF’s publication:

“Far too many of the general public view hunters as ‘me-first’ bubbas who don’t ‘get’ the big picture of habitat and species conservation. Nothing could be further from the truth. I challenge anyone to name another group of people who have done a fraction as much as sportsmen to keep North America rich in wildlife and wild country.”

No truer words can describe dedicated sportsmen and women’s role any better; pick an organization that reflects your values, and join!
When it comes to “Wild Sheep Conservation,” the leader of all conservation organizations is the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), formerly known as the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) based in Cody, Wyoming. The organization was founded in 1977 by sheep and mountain hunting enthusiasts and conservationists. With a membership of more than 5,000 worldwide and a Chapter and Affiliate network in North America doubling the membership to more than 10,000, WSF is the premier advocate for wild sheep, wild goats, and other mountain wildlife and their habitat. Since forming in 1977, the Wild Sheep Foundation has raised and expended more than $90 million on conservation, education, and mission advocacy programs in North America, Europe, and Asia, to meet its purpose of “Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain.”

**Wild Sheep Foundation:**
Gray Thornton, President/CEO
720 Allen Ave.
Cody, Wyoming 82414-3402
307.527.6261
info@wildsheepfoundation.org
www.wildsheepfoundation.org

For a list of other sheep organizations, check out our Chapters & Affiliates listing on our webpage.  
[http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/Page.php/cp/Chapters](http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/Page.php/cp/Chapters)  
[http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/Page.php/cp/Affiliates](http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/Page.php/cp/Affiliates)

From a commercial stand point, the author, like many hunters in the western states consider Carter’s Hunter Services and their Huntin’ Fool publication as the bible, especially in regards to staying fully up-to-date on rules and regulations within the individual states. Carter’s covers application deadlines and drawing dates, provides an overview of individual hunt areas within each state, and makes recommendations as to the areas with the largest population and/or animal size potential. If your work and time schedule prevents you from staying on top of the application process and application deadlines, Carter’s Hunter Service also provides a state application service to insure your application is filled out correctly and submitted on time. If, once you draw your bighorn sheep permit, you decide to go via a drop camp or fully-guided outfitted hunt, Carter’s can also recommend guides and outfitters in every state to whatever level you desire. Carter’s contact information is as follows.

**Carter’s Hunters Service**
P.O. Box 250  
Cedar City, UT 84721  
435.865.1020  
submit@huntinfool.com
Of the 62 million acres of bighorn sheep-occupied habitat in the Western United States, approximately 23 million acres (38%) are managed by the BLM.*

* These lands support approximately 47% of the current population of desert bighorn sheep subspecies.
Another resource for application services and guide/outfitter recommendations is Cabela's, via their “T.A.G.S.” Trophy Application and Guide Service. Cabela’s contact information is:

**Cabela’s T.A.G.S.**
610 Glover Rd. -Suite B.
Sidney, NE 69162
1.800.755-tags (8247) or 308.254.3658
www.cabelasoutdooradventures.com

A third application service is offered by Hunter Application Service (H.A.S.), operated by Larry and Stephanie Altimus of Pearce, AZ. A unique feature offered by H.A.S. is that for states requiring up-front money for their application process, H.A.S. will issue a guaranteed check using their funds, in addition to recommending areas for application, and completing and submitting your application, to insure respective deadlines are met. H.A.S. contact information is:

**Hunter Application Service**
P.O. Box 552
Pearce, AZ 85625
520.826.1032 phone/fax
altimus@vtc.net

There are other application services available, but this provides the option of three (3) quality companies to work with and compare, if you do not feel you’re up to, or want to, undertake the task of researching, making area selections, and insuring the application is in before the deadline. In addition, there are a number of booking services and outfitter associations available to assist you once you are lucky and draw a permit, and decide you would like to consider a drop camp or a fully-guided hunt.

As I have encouraged people to take advantage of the opportunity to draw a tag and/or enter various raffles, I too often encounter the comment, “Oh what’s the use, the odds are so bad.” To this response I have always replied, “Thank you.” Because if you decide not to enter the drawings or raffles, you are one less competitor for me, who has already drawn twenty two special licenses, including four sheep and one mountain goat, and I still put in every year in every state where once-in-a-life-time rules do not preclude me from submitting an application. I guess you can say, “I practice what I preach.”

In summary, do your research and get involved with the annual western state and province license drawings and lotteries. Build points! You will be happy you did in future years. Good luck in the drawings, and best of luck when you strike-it-rich and go on that long-awaited bighorn sheep hunt!

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**Bighorn Sheep Translocation History**

Kevin Hurley, WSF Conservation Director

Since forming in the mid-1970s, the Wild Sheep Foundation (formerly known as the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep) and its network of Chapters and Affiliates have raised and spent ~$90,000,000 toward our mission of “Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain.” Generating revenue and directly funding bighorn sheep translocations have been huge components of WSF’s conservation legacy.

No one knows with certainty how many bighorn sheep occurred 150 years ago in what now comprise 15 western states and 2 Canadian provinces. A ‘pre-European settlement’ estimate of 2,000,000 bighorns made in 1928 by early naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton cannot be validated, and in fact, has been strongly disagreed with by many contemporary scientists and wildlife managers. But, no one disagreed that bighorn sheep numbers were dramatically reduced by the 1940s/1950s. In fact, in a seminal 1960 monograph titled “Bighorn Sheep of the United States”, Helmut K. Buechner estimated that bighorn sheep numbers range-wide had decreased to only ~17,000 remaining, anywhere, by 1955.


Restoration of historic bighorn range via transplants has been attempted in 15 states, 2 provinces, and portions of Mexico, for the past 90+ years. In a major undertaking by the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group, a “master spreadsheet” including every documented bighorn sheep translocation ever recorded has been developed over the past 5 years.

To date, translocation data from BC, AB, and all 15 western states have been entered into a continually-evolving EXCEL spreadsheet, incorporating data on number of bighorns captured/released, age/sex composition of captured/released bighorns (if recorded), specific date(s) of capture/release (if recorded), and Latitude/Longitude coordinates from both capture and release sites. Using modern-day GIS mapping tools, over 70+ GIS maps have been generated, portraying “inter”- and “intra”-jurisdictional translocations of bighorn sheep, showing imports, exports and within-jurisdictional bighorn transplants.
Numbers and data entry continue, but ~5,900 desert bighorns have been moved between and within 7 southwestern states over the past ~70 years, in ~400 discrete translocations. For Rocky Mountain and California bighorn sheep, over the past ~90 years, ~14,350 bighorns have been captured/relocated in ~1,000 transplant actions. Combined, more than 20,250 bighorns have been moved, in over 1,400 translocations, over the past 90 years! Talk about putting sheep on the mountain!!

Once this translocation spreadsheet has been finalized enough, these data and 70+ GIS maps will be posted and made available on the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group website http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com, with links to be provided from the Wild Sheep Foundation website http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org, as well. We’re currently working to obtain similar desert bighorn translocation data from Mexico, which will ultimately be included/incorporated into this ‘master’ EXCEL spreadsheet.

The Wild Sheep Foundation and our WSF Chapters & Affiliates have much to be proud of for our long-term volunteerism, financial investment, and dedication/commitment to restoration of bighorn sheep to much of their historic range. A detailed map assembled by the WAFWA WSWG agency biologists shows 2012 bighorn distribution; compare that to pre-1800 and mid-1950s maps! While numbers and density are nowhere near pre-settlement levels, bighorn sheep have been successfully restored in many locations in the western U.S., southern Canada, and northern Mexico. From a low of ~17,000 bighorns in 1955, current bighorn numbers now total ~70,000. Please be assured, and rightfully proud, that this is where a lot of the money raised by WSF and its Chapters and Affiliates has gone, directly to mission-programs!
Sheep Population RMBS  6,400 (2012)
Resident & non-resident licenses  2,442 (2012)
Special auction license  2 (1 for open auction 1 for resident only)
Application deadline  June 25th each year
Tentative drawing date  July 15th each year
Resident license cost  $51.31
Non-resident (Cdn. & Alien) license cost  $317.82
2012 Harvest RMBS  170

Sheep Population DBS  4,500 (2012)
License RMBS  13
License DBS  82
Application deadline  June
Tentative drawing date  August
Resident tag cost  $272.50+hunting license
Non-resident tag cost  $1,407.50+$151.25+$7.50
Youth license cost  $26.50
2012 Harvest RMBS  12 Rams
2012 Harvest DBS  80 Rams

Arizona is one of the top must-apply states due to quantity and quality, especially in respect to their Desert Bighorns. In addition to the desert bighorns, Arizona also is home to Rocky Mountain bighorns; however you can only apply for one species in a single year. Most people concentrate on the Desert and once successful, focus on the Rockies.

Arizona accepts both paper and online applications. Arizona has a unique draw system in that a “bonus” is awarded for each year of an unsuccessful application; when you have applied for five consecutive years, the applicant is awarded a “loyalty bonus point.” In addition, if you travel to Arizona and take their Hunter Education Course, no matter what your age, you are awarded a “permanent bonus point.” For every bonus point an applicant has, their name is entered into the drawing one more time. The permanent bonus point applies to all game species drawings in Arizona. It is possible to draw a license in Arizona the very first year of applying, since all names are entered into the same drawing. Arizona also offers a “bonus point only” option for applicants who want to build points without a chance of drawing a tag in a particular year. In order to apply, a non-refundable license must be purchased initially. Arizona is a once-in-a-lifetime state for each species of sheep.

Arizona does offer a “super lottery” raffle opportunity which provides the holder with year-round opportunity in select units.

Arizona is a very friendly youth state with their license fees and their minimum age of 10 years of age at the start of the hunt; applicants must also be 10 years of age by the application deadline to apply for “bonus” points.”

Arizona Game & Fish Department can be reached at 602.942.3000 or www.azgfd.com

Alberta does not offer a “super lottery” raffle opportunity which provides the holder with year-round opportunity in select units. Alberta is a very friendly youth state with their license fees and their minimum age of 10 years of age at the start of the hunt; applicants must also be 10 years of age by the application deadline to apply for “bonus” points.”

Alberta Game & Fish Department can be reached at 1.780.944.0313, emailed via srd.infocent@gov.ab.ca or via the web www.albertaregulations.ca
who wish to obtain a B.C. resident hunter number card, and a first B.C. resident hunting license. The BCWF is responsible for CORE program administration, the keeping of graduate records and the public availability of the CORE examinations through a provincial network of certified CORE examiners. For more information and to obtain the CORE manual, visit the BCWF’s CORE program website. Please direct your CORE questions to the BC Wildlife Federation:

Phone: 604.882.9988 or toll free at 1.888.881.2293
E-mail: Wildlife@BCWF.bc.ca
Mail: BC Wildlife Federation, Unit 101
9706 188th Street
Surrey, B.C. V4N3M2

Sheep Population RMBS 6,550 (2011)
Resident & non-resident sheep licenses 2,335 (2011)
Special auction 1
Resident Application deadline mid-May
Tentative drawing date mid-June
Resident sheep license cost $60 ($15 + $6 for Limited Entry Hunt)
Resident hunting license cost $32
Non-resident license cost $620
Non-resident (Cdn.) hunting license cost $75
Non-resident (Alien) hunting license cost $180
2011 Ram Harvest RMBS/CABHS 85

In addition to Dall’s and Stone’s, BC has both Rocky Mountain and California bighorn sheep. All non-resident hunters wishing to hunt big game in BC must be accompanied by a registered guide or accompanied by a resident who holds a Permit to Accompany. You must fill out an application to receive your non-resident hunting license and species licenses. The application package includes the application form, a complete list of guide outfitters in the province, a copy of the current hunting regulations, and a list of license costs. Guide outfitters charge different rates, depending on the package you are buying. Non-resident/Non-resident Alien hunting application packages may be obtained by contacting the British Columbia Ministry of Forestry, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations at:

Fish and Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment
P.O. Box 9374, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9M4 Canada
Telephone: Toll free 1.800.663.7867 or local 250.356.1427

The Conservation Outdoor Recreation Education (CORE) program is designed for individuals wishing to obtain their first B.C. resident hunting license. It is offered through a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the British Columbia Wildlife Federation (BCWF). The program is useful for anyone interested in outdoor recreation, wildlife and firearms safety. The successful completion of the program is required for B.C. residents at age 14 or over.

California has a modified “preference” point system wherein an applicant receives one preference point for each year of an unsuccessful application. One tag goes into a drawing with all applicants, and additional tags for the respective unit go into a drawing of applicants with the maximum number of preference points; however, currently California only offers one non-resident sheep tag.

California offers a “preference point only” option for a cost of $8.13. Currently, California does not offer a “super lottery” opportunity. A non-refundable hunting license must be purchased to enter an application for the sheep tag drawing. California is a once-in-a-lifetime state. The minimum age to hunt and apply is 12 years of age by July 1st.

The California Department of Fish & Wildlife can be reached at 706.937.0238 or www.dfg.ca.gov
Sheep Population RMBS  7010 (2012)
Sheep Population DBS  515 (2012)
Licenses RMB   199 Ram, 265 Total
Licenses DBS   12
Special auction/raffle  2
Application deadline  April 2, 2013
Tentative Drawing  May
Resident license cost  $251.00
Non-resident license cost RMBS $1,951.00+$10.00+$3.00
DBS $1,301.00+$10.00+$3.00
2012 Harvest RMBS  115 Rams
2012 Harvest DBS  10 Rams

Colorado is for sure a must-apply state for sheep hunters. Colorado offers an opportunity to apply for either Rocky Mountain Bighorn or Desert Bighorn sheep and it only takes $13.00 for adults and $3.00 for youth for a non-refundable application fee per species to apply. The minimum age to hunt in Colorado is 11 years of age as long as they are going to turn 12 years of age in the year they will be hunting. These are the lowest non-refundable applications of all western states. Colorado does not have a requirement to purchase a hunting license to apply or hunt since the big game licenses encompass the hunting license. Sheep applications must be submitted on paper application.

Colorado has a unique “preference point” system for RMBS wherein the first three years of applying are used to build up to three preference points with no chance of drawing a tag. Once three preference points have been accrued, then for all future application years, “weighted” bonus points are assigned with which the applicant’s chances of drawing are increased. Preference points do not apply to desert bighorn sheep; that draw is random. Units that non-residents can apply for are identified in the brochure each year. Non-residents are allocated 10% of the statewide license number.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife can be reached at 303.297.1192 or www.wildlife.state.co.us

Idaho does not offer a bonus or preference point system. All applications are entirely random (resident & non-resident) and on equal footing. This plus the requirement of purchasing a non-refundable hunting license and an application fee ($14.75) results in Idaho having some of the best, if not the best, odds in drawing a sheep tag vs. other western states. Idaho also has two species of sheep, the Rocky Mountain and the California Bighorn, but only allows the applicant to make application for one of the species within a single year. Odds of drawing a tag in normal years results in a 1 in 20 chance for California Bighorn and a 1 in 30 chance for Rocky Mountain Bighorn. Obviously a must state to apply; just pick your species of choice.

Youth must be 12 years of age at the start of the hunt, at reduced hunting and tag fees. For controlled hunts units, only 1 non-resident tag is provided in hunt units with 10 tags or less; for units with more than 10 tags total, 10% of available tags will be allocated for non-residents. A maximum of 10% of total ID tags will be allocated to non-residents.

Once drawn, if a sheep is not taken, there is a two-year waiting period before re-entering the application process. If a sheep is taken, Idaho is a once-in-a-lifetime state; however, a successful hunter is permitted to make application for a second species. Idaho also offers a “Super” lottery raffle drawing opportunity for a sheep tag that allows the holder to hunt in any open unit within the state.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game can be reached at 208.334.3700 or www.fishandgame.idaho.gov
### Montana

- **Sheep Population RMBS**: 5,000 (2012)
- **Ram Licenses**: 123
- **Special auction licenses/raffle licenses**: 2
- **Application deadline**: May 1st
- **Tentative drawing date**: June
- **Resident license cost**: $130.00
- **Non-resident license cost**: $755.00
- **2012 Harvest**: 120 Rams

Montana is the state anyone interested in a Rocky Mountain bighorn must consider applying for, due to the number of non-resident tags and the proven high quality of the sheep taken every year; some of the biggest and very best in the west. Although a big ram can come from any unit, most of the bigger ones are coming from the mid to eastern units which can be the easier units to hunt. Montana has a bonus point system, wherein a bonus point is given for each year of an unsuccessful application and a $20.00 bonus point fee is included with the application. Each successive year, the accumulated bonus points are squared to increase the long-term applicant's odds of drawing a tag. Residents and non-residents are in the same drawing with the same odds of being drawn until the pre-established non-resident quota is reached for the respective unit. Non-residents are allowed up to, but not guaranteed, 10% of the tags allotted per hunt unit. Once successful in drawing a sheep license, there is a seven (7) year waiting period before one may reapply. The full license fee is charged at the time of application. The minimum age to apply and hunt in Montana is 12 years of age by January 16th of the year in which the application is submitted.

A second opportunity in Montana is their “Super Lottery” raffle drawing in which the winner is allowed to hunt any open unit in the state.

A third very unique feature offered by Montana (and no other western state) are the six (6) unlimited areas with guaranteed licenses. The hunt units are 300, 301, 303, 500, 501, and 502 bordering the north boundary of Yellowstone National Park. Hunters who plan to hunt any of the unlimited areas are not eligible to apply in the regular application process. Sheep hunting season opens on September 15th.

Montana rules & regulations may be requested by calling 406.444.2535 or going online at www.fwp.mt.gov

### Nebraska

- **Sheep Population RMBS**: 335 (2012)
- **Total licenses available**: 0
  (Number of licenses dependent upon annual Population survey)
- **Application deadline**: August
- **Tentative drawing date**: Late August/Early September
- **License cost**: $25.00
- **2011 Harvest**: 2
- **2012 Harvest RMBS**: 0

Nebraska’s season and the number of licenses issued are totally based on their annual population survey, and are only offered to residents. If a second license is available for auction, a non-resident may purchase a license.

The Nebraska license includes a fully-guided hunt conducted by Nebraska Game and Parks staff, and up to four (4) days and nights meals and lodging at the historic Fort Robinson State Park Lodge.

Nebraska currently does not offer a “bonus or preference” point system or a “super lottery” raffle opportunity. Nebraska has a very unique and progressive requirement regarding youth hunters. Everyone 12-25 years of age has to either have taken a hunter education course if hunting with a firearm, or a bow hunter education exemption certificate” and be accompanied at all times in the field (close verbal contact) by a companion nineteen (19) years of age or older who has successfully completed the respective hunter education course.

The Nebraska Game & Parks Commission can be reached at 308.763.2940 or http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov
In addition to having more sheep than any other state, Nevada also has three different species of sheep including Rocky Mountain Bighorn, Desert Bighorn, and California Bighorn. Therefore, Nevada is for sure a must-apply state. Nevada normally awards 20 Desert Bighorn tags, 4 California Bighorn tags, and 1 Rocky Mountain tag to non-resident applicants. The minimum age to make application and hunt in Nevada is 12 years of age before the end of the hunt.

Nevada has a unique bonus point system, where in addition to receiving a bonus point for each unsuccessful application, Nevada squares the number of points when applying them in all future drawings, making the system the most effective of all states. Some mathematical critics of the system feel it favors the middle 2/3s of the bonus point holders; i.e., in 2012 the maximum number of points being held was 20, therefore point holders with between 6 & 15 points seem to have an advantage. Even though the odds are difficult, it is mathematically possible for a first time applicant to draw a tag. Likewise, if an application is made for each of the three sheep it is possible to draw more than one tag in a given year. All accumulated bonus points are lost if the applicant fails to apply for the respective species for two consecutive years.

Applications are normally available online the third week of March and the drawing results are available 48 hours after the drawing is held. If you wish to accumulate points without a chance of drawing a tag Nevada offers a “points only” option, however, a non-refundable hunting licenses must be purchased. Once a sheep tag is drawn, there is a ten year waiting period before the applicant is eligible to reenter the application process as relates to sheep.

Nevada Department of Wildlife can be reached at 775.688.1500 or www.ndow.org

New Mexico is a great state to apply in, despite the high up-front non-refundable license fee that was introduced in 2012. New Mexico does not have a bonus point system, and therefore, residents and non-residents are equal in the drawing process. Applications can be made for both Rocky Mountain and Desert Bighorns on the same online application. The land of Enchantment also offers a “super lottery” raffle drawing opportunity to draw a sheep license that allows the holder to hunt any open unit within the state. If drawn in the regular application process, the lucky tag winner is not eligible for the “super lottery” raffle.

The 33 drawing tags include 2 public and 1 private land “youth” permit in some of the best units in the state making New Mexico the number one state as related to “youth” opportunities.

As a special attraction, New Mexico also offers Barbary sheep hunting in select units; the non-resident license cost $380.00

New Mexico does not have a minimum age to hunt as long as youth under 18 years of age carries proof of having successfully completed a Hunter Education course with a certificate on their person while in the field hunting.

New Mexico is a once-in-a-lifetime state for both species of bighorns.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish can be reached at 505.476.8000 or http://wildlife.state.nm.us
**North Dakota**

Total licenses available 4
Special auction license 1
Application deadline Mid-March
Tentative drawing date Late April
Resident license $20 + $3 application fee
Nonresident license $500 + $100 application fee
2012 Harvest RMBS 4 Rams

North Dakota’s herd is 100% Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Residents and non-residents can apply for a lottery license; however, no more than one lottery license may be issued to a non-resident. The auction license is available to residents and non-residents. North Dakota’s lottery licenses are once-in-a-lifetime, and hunter education is a requirement. North Dakota does not have a preference point system.

Outfitting on public land is prohibited in North Dakota; however, rams are accessible to hunters and success rates are typically 100%.

The North Dakota Game & Fish Department can be reached at 701.227.7431 or www.gf.nd.gov

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**Oregon**

Sheep Population RMBS 4,200 (2012)
Licenses 97 (2012)
Special auction/raffle 2
Application deadline May 15
Tentative drawing date June 15
Resident license $122.50 + 29.50
Non-resident license $1,300.50 + $140.50
2012 Harvest RMBS 98 Rams (INCLUDES 1 TRIBAL HARVEST)

Oregon is home to two different species of Bighorn Sheep, both Rocky Mountain and California. The applicant may only apply for one of the species in the same year. A non-refundable hunting license is required when applying. Application can be made online, paper application or via fax. If you made a mistake or want to change the application, it is possible before June 1st. Oregon does not offer either a “bonus or preference” point system, so everyone is on an equal basis going into the draw. Oregon does offer a “Super lottery” raffle that entitles the holder to hunt in any open unit in the state. One of the unique features of the Oregon process is that to make application you only need to purchase a non-refundable hunting license plus an application fee. Then if drawn, you need to submit the tag fee.

Oregon is a once-in-a-lifetime state for each species; however the special auction and raffle tags are exempt from the once-in-a-lifetime restriction. The minimum age to hunt in Oregon is 12 years of age at the beginning of the hunt; however, youth can apply for “points only” starting at the age of 9 in the first year of applying.

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife can be reached at 503.947.6000 or www.dfw.or.us

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**South Dakota**

Sheep Population RMBS 300 (2012)
Total licenses available 3 (2013)
(Number of licenses dependent upon annual Population survey)
Resident 2
Special auction 1
Application deadline August
Tentative drawing date late August/Early September
Resident license cost $25.00
2012 Harvest RMBS 2 Rams

South Dakota has four different herds of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Some have suffered from some health problems in the past but are improving.

Up until 2013, South Dakota only offered sheep hunting for residents. However, for 2013, the South Dakota Commission approved a process for one sheep license to be auctioned, as long as there are at least three or more licenses approved for a given year. The Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation auctioned this license for $103,000 at their March 2013 annual fundraiser.

South Dakota has a “preference” point system wherein a preference point is awarded for each year of unsuccessful application. South Dakota also offers a “points only” option in their application system in case someone wants to build points without the chance of drawing in the respective year at a nonrefundable cost of $5.00. South Dakota does not currently offer a “Super Lottery” raffle. Hunter education is required.

The South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks can be reached at 605.394.2391 or http://gfp.sd.gov
Sheep Population DBS  1,300 (2012)
Total licenses   17
Application deadline  October
Drawing date   November
Special auction/raffle  1
Resident license cost  $25.00
Non-resident license cost  $315
2012 Harvest     15

Of the 14-16 annual bighorn sheep permits issued in Texas, the majority of the permits are issued to private landowners to do with what they wish, resulting in 2-3 tags available for application/drawings. Texas does not offer a bonus point system; Texas has the lowest tag fees of any western state.

Texas offers two very unique opportunities for their allocated drawing tags.

1. Texas Grand Slam -- $10.00 application fee. The Texas Grand Slam offers one lucky winner four separate Texas big game hunts: Desert Bighorn Sheep, white-tail deer, pronghorn, and Desert Mule Deer. The only hunt occurring on state land is the Bighorn hunt. All other species are hunted on private ranches through private donation. The Bighorn hunt is a 5-day, fully guided hunt. You may purchase as many Big Time Texas Hunts entries as you wish. This hunt package also includes free taxidermy (shoulder mounts) of the harvested species.

2. Guided Bighorn Sheep Hunt Package -- $10.00 application fee. The Guided Bighorn Sheep Hunt Package offers one lucky winner a guided hunt for one Desert Bighorn ram. It is a 5-day hunt that will occur on one of the three TPWD management areas occupied by bighorn. You may purchase only one application per person.

Note – Both hunt packages include food, lodging, guide service, and on-site transportation.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department can be reached at 432.837.0666 or www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Sheep Population RMBS  2,500 (2011)
Sheep population DBS  2,740 (2011)
Licenses RMBS   37
Licenses RMBS   54
Non-resident licenses  5
Special auction/raffle licenses  8
Application deadline  End of February
Resident licenses   $508 + 26
Non-resident licenses  $1,513 + 65
2011 Harvest RMBS  37
2011 Harvest DBS  47

A feature of Utah is that it is home to three species of sheep, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn, California Bighorn, and the Desert Bighorn, which makes it a must-state in which to apply and build points. Due to quality/age of sheep in the different units, do your homework as to which units offer the better quality for the respective species. Rules and regulations are available only online, plus application must be submitted online.

Utah has a bonus point system, wherein you earn bonus point for every unsuccessful year. Half of all permits are reserved for maximum point holders, with the remaining half open to all other applicants. A computer randomly generates a number for each bonus point. The lowest number then becomes the draw number. The lower the number, the better the applicant’s chances are of being drawn. One advantage Utah offers is that you do not have to have front all of the license fees at the time of application. With the application, you are charged a $10.00 application fee, along with a non-refundable hunting license fee. Then, only if you are successful in the license draw will you be charged the sheep permit fee. Youth need to be 12 years of age or older during the calendar year in which they will be hunting. All Utah sheep permits are once-in-a-lifetime.

Utah also offers a “super lottery” raffle drawing opportunity to draw a sheep license, which allows the holder to hunt in any open unit within the state.

The Utah Division of Wildlife can be reached at 801.538.4700 or http://wildlife.utah.gov/dwr.
Washington has two species of sheep, Rocky Mountain Bighorn & California Bighorn. Good trophies are possible in almost every unit. To apply, a non-refundable application permit must be purchased. Washington has no preset non-resident quota. Residents and non-residents are all in the same drawing, so in theory, all available licenses could all go to residents or non-residents. Washington does offer a bonus point system wherein a bonus point is awarded for each unsuccessful year of applying, and accumulated points are squared in future years. There is no minimum age to apply or hunt in Washington.

The State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife can be contacted at 360.902.220 or www.wdfw.wa.gov

Wyoming has the highest number of non-resident licenses and produces quality rams, and therefore is for sure a must-apply state. Wyoming has a modified preference point system wherein a point is earned for each unsuccessful year of applying. 75% of available licenses in each hunt unit go into a preference drawing and the remaining 25% of available licenses go into a random roll-over drawing. Wyoming has a points only option (July 1-September 30; residents $7, non-residents $100) as well, in case an applicant is only interested in building points for a future application year. Once successful in drawing a license, there is a 5-year waiting period before one can apply again. The minimum age to hunt in Wyoming is 12 years of age, however; the minimum age to apply for bonus points is 11 years of age and they must reach their 12th birthday within the year for which they are applying.

Starting in 2013, all rules & regulations plus applications are only available on the website at http://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/home.aspx. Wyoming has both an online and paper application process, but both require the tag fee to be submitted at the time of application. Wyoming accepts MasterCard, Visa, and Discover cards for payment. In case there is a change of mind after the application is submitted, Wyoming allows you to re-enter the system and change the hunt unit for which the application was submitted. More drastic changes can be made but will result in added cost, since it will require forfeit of the initial application fee.

Even with some reduction in populations and number of both resident and non-resident licenses for the 2013 season.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)  
Wild Sheep Working Group (WSWG)  
Statement of Purpose and Structure:

“To identify priority topics and management challenges to wild sheep in the western U.S. and Canada; to collaboratively develop solutions to those challenges; and to foster strong relationships between wild sheep agencies and wild sheep advocates.”

Formed in January 2007, the WSWG was tasked with developing a comprehensive, west-wide assessment of all facets of wild sheep management in the western U.S. and Canada. The initial assignment was to develop WAFWA recommendations for management of domestic sheep and goats in wild sheep habitat.

The WSWG is comprised of a representative from each WAFWA state, province, and territory (N=19) with wild sheep, plus representatives from the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The WSWG meets twice/year, in conjunction with the WAFWA summer meeting and the Wild Sheep Foundation annual convention.

http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com